

Middletown School Readiness Council
12:00 P.M. - 1:30 P.M.
Wednesday, January 23, 2012
Wilbert Snow School
299 Wadsworth St.
Middletown, CT 06457

RECEIVED
13 FEB - 1 AM 8:55
TOWN CLERK
MIDDLETOWN, CONN.

Members Present: Betsy Morgan, Christine Fahey, Sheila Daniels, Wendy Berlind, Susan Sienkiewicz, Beverly Lawrence, Donna Marino, Christine O'Grady, Lisa Golebiewski, Daria Keyes, Ed Bonilla, Amy Waterman and Alice Torres. **Also present:** Sonja Ahuja.

I. Welcome & Call to Order: Betsy Morgan called the meeting to order at 12:10 PM. Introductions were made.

II. Announcements: Donna Marino distributed People Empowering People (PEP) flyers for a Spanish speaking training and offered background on the program as well as flyers for the upcoming Middletown School Association (MSA) meeting on January 28th at 6:30 P.M. at Middletown Youth Services, 372 Hunting Hill Avenue featuring the Superintendent and Associate Superintendent of Schools. Christine O'Grady distributed brochures for the Child First program which currently has a wait list of seven families. A "Save the Date" flyer for Goodwin College's annual literacy conference on May 2nd was circulated. Ed Bonilla mentioned concern around low enrollment in Middlesex's early childhood degree program.

III. Acceptance of the December 19, 2012 School Readiness Council meeting: Donna Marino moved to accept the minutes from the above mentioned date. Wendy Berlind seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Financial Report: was circulated and reflected spending the grant down. It was noted there is presently one opening. Compared to other communities, we are doing well filling spaces, but in comparison to our past, we have an increase in unfilled spaces that is reflected in the unearned funds in the report. The slot report was circulated and showed that the great majority of our children continue to be from low income families and on public insurance.

V. Coordinator's Report:

NAEYC Reaccreditation Update: Middlesex's two sites (one on campus and the other housed at Macdonough School) had their site visit and received word of reaccreditation. This was the first time both programs went through the process together. Congratulations to Director Hilary Phelps and staff on this accomplishment. It was also noted that Middlesex's early education associate degree program is readying for a site visit in March for NAEYC institutional accreditation. A brief discussion followed. It was noted that low wages in the early childhood field are a main reason for low program enrollment.

United Way Annual Meeting: Another exciting announcement for Middletown early education programs - Even Start will be honored at the annual United Way meeting on January 29th at 8

AM at the Riverhouse in Haddam as the recipient of the Community Impact Award. Ed Bonilla encouraged Council members interested in supporting the Even Start program staff to attend the event.

Preschool Experience Report: for this year's kindergarten cohort was distributed and reviewed with the Council. Discussion followed. Council members were interested in the number of children who attended some preschool, but did not meet the state's definition of attending. Chris will bring that data to the February Council meeting. A discussion was held about transportation being a huge barrier to some children. At a future MAIC meeting, there will be discussion on public transportation. This may be the venue for sharing our concerns.

Budget Revision for BOE Program: The Council must approve this revision. A shift of funds is being requested from the benefits line item to be transferred in order to allow payment for a copier contract. The total budget amount does not change under this revision. Alice Torres moved to accept the revised budget. Christine O'Grady seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

School Readiness and Quality Enhancement Grants RFP: will be going out shortly. This is the first time these two RFPs are going out together and also an early time for the Quality Enhancement Grant, which is good because of the late arrival of these funds under the previous timeline. This is easily illustrated by the fact that we have just received the QE funding for the current year. A reminder was given to the Grants Committee that they will be meeting in March to review applications. This is the RFP for the next biennium, so it is more involved. We have been told there will be a new fee scale. SDE is proposing a legislative change to the evaluation process which will move from the present annual evaluation to a systematic and consistent-across-communities ongoing monitoring system.

Early Childhood Teacher Credential Forums: will be offered in numerous cities/towns for discussion around the new credentialing beyond 2015, as it is quite complex. These forums have been scheduled for those interested in understanding the process. A flyer outlining the dates and locations was circulated.

QRIS System: The governor's early childhood plan should be unveiled soon. There are expectations that it will include a QRIS system. CT superintendents have united to share their concern that the public schools would need to license their preschool programs under the recommendations that came from the work group for this system.

Minor Renovations RFP: The application is complex and may deter some programs from applying. Locally, the YMCA is still interested.

Early Literacy Update: A three-part training series in oral language development and early literacy is underway now and will be offered again in March. Kindergarten and preschool staff will be trained on the school district's February professional development day. Let's Talk...It Makes a Difference, a full day train-the-trainer session, is being offered tomorrow at the YMCA. 30 participants have registered and there is a waiting list. The collaborative is looking at bringing Raising Readers training to Middletown. A pilot training for RR for home day care

providers is in development. Circle of Security training will be offered May 11-14 at the UConn School of Social Work. Middletown has reserved twenty spaces and flyers will be distributed soon. Attendance data gathering is on hold in the school district until PowerSchool is in place next year. The same is true for the community program attendance data gathering. Further work will wait until a community preschool data collection tool, which is in development, is complete. The Provider Council has formed a study group to learn more about chronic absenteeism. Through Discovery, we are able to access technical assistance in both chronic absenteeism and summer learning loss for community preschool programs and the school district.

Pre-K - K Alignment Update: A letter from the superintendent has gone out to all preschool programs asking them to contact a child's elementary school to set up a transition meeting for children who exhibit challenging behavior or may need additional support in the transition to kindergarten.

Age 3 to Grade 3 Institute: Middletown is eligible to participate in the forum "Closing the Achievement Gap: Getting PreK-Grade 3 Right" featuring Dr. Kristie Kauerz on February 25th from 8:30 AM - 12 PM at the West Hartford town hall. Chris will send out the flyer in an email with instructions for registering and waiving the \$25 fee.

Discovery Update: The third installment of the "First 1,000 Days" was held on Tuesday. A copy of the PowerPoint by the keynote speaker, John Kania, was circulated and a summary of two panel presentations was given.

Opportunity Knocks Update: The next meeting will be on February 26th with Value Options as the guest speakers. Additional MI training is being developed to allow the collaborative to hone their skills. Monica attended training at U.C. Davis on baby behaviors and feeding cues. Opportunity Knocks received a \$5,000 grant from Middlesex County Community Foundation to develop a peer support group around promoting good nutrition. The oral health work group is developing a motivational training presentation for dental professionals. The behavioral health work group continues to smooth out the tiers of the system with special emphasis on the top intervention tier.

Child First Update: A full time care coordinator, Anna Vargas, has been hired. She is bilingual with 18 years of experience with the Casey Foundation and will be a good fit for the program. Clinicians will be going through training and receiving video training around working with young children. They are looking to partner with Circle of Security.

EHS Update: The program is maintaining full enrollment and is actively recruiting. They are looking forward to "Let's Talk" training. The DCF partnership is ongoing. The April Head Start agenda includes hopes for continued funding. The Leadership Institute is coming and parent leadership is growing. Alice noted that she may bring the transportation issue (as discussed earlier in the meeting) into their conversation. At the state level the CT Head Start Organization is considering putting forward an annual report for the state, which would be a first, a voice united. They will focus on five indicators to report on statewide which will give a unified voice to support their work. Alice will be presenting at the Board of Education meeting on February 12th.

Preschool Informational Fair: Wendy Berlind is assisting Kitty Robinson of Russell Library with this event to be held at Russell Library on March 16th from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.

VI. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 1:39 P.M., with thanks to those in attendance.

The next meeting of the Middletown School Readiness Council will take place on

Wednesday, February 20, 2013

from

12:00 - 1:30 P.M.

at

Wilbert Snow School

299 Wadsworth St.

Middletown, CT 06457

Respectfully Submitted by:
Sheila C. Daniels